

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 02309 170530Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-05 SSO-00 AS-01 /016 W
-----170537Z 107431 /17
O R 170451Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3400
INFO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 2309

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CDES
SUBJECT: EXPORT OF HUMAN REMAINS FROM COOK ISLANDS

REF: STATE 137882, WELLINGTON 2272

1. COOK ISLANDS MINISTER OF HEALTH HAS CONFIRMED THAT THERE ARE NO EMBALMING, CREMATION OR STORAGE FACILITIES FOR REMAINS IN RAROTONGA. CONTRARY TO WELLINGTON'S REFTEL, MINISTER OF HEALTH STATED INTERMENT MUST TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF DEATH.

2. NEW ZEALAND OFFICIALS STATED THEY WILL ALLOW REMAINS TO LENTER FOR CREMATION IF THEY ARE ENCLOSED IN A SEALED PLYTHENE BAG OR ZINC LINED CONTAINER WHICH CONFORMS WITH IATA REGULATIONS. AIRLINE OFFICIALS STATE IATA REGULATIONS REQUIRE REMAINS MUST BE IN ZINC LINED LEAD HERMETICALLY SEALED COFFIN. FUNERAL DIRECTOR IN AUCKLAND IS READY TO FURNISH THESE MATERIALS UPON NOTIFICATION.

3. ARRANGING FOR TRANSPORATATION REMAINS FROM COOK ISLANDS TO AUCKLAND COULD BE DIFFICULT WITHIN THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS PERIOD AS THERE ARE ONLY THREE FLIGHTS FROM AUCKLAND TO RAROTONGA WEEKLY. IN ABSENCE OF STORAGE FACILITIES AND MINISTER OF HEALTH'S STATEMENT THAT ALL HUMAN REMAINS MUST BE INTERRED WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF DEATH IT COULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO
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ARRANGE FOR THE SHIPMENT OF REMAINS OUT OF THE COOK ISLANDS. THE EMBASSY INQUIRED ABOUT CHARTER FLIGHTS BUT CHEAPEST ONE IS OVER \$7000.

4. NEW ZEALAND AND COOK ISLAND AUGHORITIES REQUIRE DEATH CERTIFICATES SIGNED BY A MEDICAL DOCTOR. THIS COULD BE A PROBLEM AS DOCTOR BRYCH IS NOT A LICENSED PHYSICIAN ACCORDING

TO NEW ZEALAND REGULATIONS. ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE FOR COMPLETING THESE DOCUMENTS BY A AUTHORIZED MEDICAL DOCTOR BEFORE SHIPPING COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. HOPEFULLY, THIS COULD BE ARRANGED IF NECESSARY BUT TO DATE THERE HAVE BEEN NO PRECEDENTS SO EMBASSY UNABLE TO GIVE COMPLETE ASSURANCE ON THIS MATTER.

5. COSTS OF CREMATION AND SHIPMENT FROM AUCKLAND/BOSTON APPROXIMATELY \$675 US. SHIPMENT FROM RAROTONGA TO AUCKLAND ABOUT \$250 US. COST OF SHIPPING CONTAINERS APPROXIMATELY \$350 US.

6. EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT DEPARTMENT URGE FAMILY TO ARRANGE FOR MS WILBUR'S TRANSPORTATION HOME NOW IF IT IS POSSIBLE.

7. DEPARTMENT REQUESTED TO NOTIFY EMBASSY OF FAMILY'S DECISION.

FOR AUCKLAND - FUNERAL DIRECTOR REFERRED TO IN ITEM 2 IS MR. LAMBERT FOUNTAIN, PAPA KURA.
KILLGORE

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